

can only do this in so short a space by continuous generalization, and so the reader has to remind himself now and then that he is not being given facts, but a series of judgments on facts which for the most part are unstated.

These judgments are most apt when the writer is dealing with the social and economic developments of his period. His reflections on ecclesiastical history are not so just. There are inaccuracies of statement; for example the variations in the calendar of the Celtic Church are put on a par with the deviations in doctrine of the Arians, and called unorthodox; and the ecclesiastical censure of interdict is spoken of as though it were a sort of excommunication in bulk. Then again to say that Christian teaching 'mainly affected the manners of the knightly class, and spilled over into the conscience of common men in the less desirable forms of mariolatry and saint worship' is to put a wholly false and anachronistic division between the religion of the upper and lower orders. Medieval devotion, medieval superstition and crypto-paganism were common to all classes of society, clergy not excluded.

The author does not indeed overstate the entanglement of the medieval Church in temporal society and politics—it would scarcely be possible to do so. But he does seem to regard the Church and religion as purely social phenomena, and not as existing and functioning in their own right. So he can talk of the Roman Church, with its sense of order and authority, being the Roman Empire's chief legacy to the West, when in fact almost the exact opposite was the case; it was scraps and relics of the Roman Empire which were preserved for us by the Church. The principle of authority in the Church is not derived from Roman Imperialism, and it developed into the 'Papal Absolutism' of the Middle Ages when secular absolutism had been dead for centuries.

A historian of course does not have to accept the Church's claim to be a divine society, in order to be a good historian. But he should realize that the claim is made in all seriousness, and that it dominates ecclesiastical history. Judgments are bound to be distorted if an institution which holds itself to be the tabernacle of God with men is looked upon merely as a sort of universal community centre, built in the Gothic style.

E.H.

MEMBERS OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT. By D. Brunton and D. H. Pennington. (Longmans; 21s.)

This serious study of the composition of the Long Parliament written in collaboration by Mr Donald Pennington and the late Mr Douglas Brunton is introduced by Professor R. H. Tawney in a careful and judicious foreword. The book opens with a chapter on the 'Original Members' which draws attention to the interesting point that on an average the Royalists belonged to a younger age-group than the

Parliamentarians. It has long been realized that the Opposition had the greater weight of previous parliamentary experience. The youth of a proportion of the Royalists may be contrasted with the age of the members of the Rump. These last included one hundred and six members who were between forty and sixty years of age at the time of the King's death. It is not without significance that Gray's Inn had forty-six representatives among the Rumpers.

There is valuable material in the relatively brief chapter on the merchants in the House of Commons, but the core of the book consists of two long chapters, the first dealing with the Eastern Association and contributed by Mr Brunton, and the second concerned with the south-west of England. In these sections an attempt is made to give detailed samples of the composition of the Long Parliament. The tendency to trace the subsequent history of the various parliamentary families leads the authors away from the subject of their study and it is a pity that on no occasion in referring to landed property in the eastern counties is the extent or value of the estate mentioned. Further, the frequent reference to an 'old family' conveys no exact information.

The chapter dealing with the six south-western counties breaks more fresh ground and the analysis of the members for Somersetshire constituencies has points of interest. In these sections Mr Pennington gives some financial details which might very well have been expanded. The most valuable portion of the whole book is the close examination of the Dorset constituencies. An analysis of the six families that between them held the county seat and those for the boroughs of Bridport, Corfe Castle, Dorchester, Poole, Warham and Weymouth between the year of the Armada and the close of the seventeenth century is especially illuminating. Many interesting details are given, but the effort to divide the leading families into categories is not wholly convincing. The note on the Dorchester Company adventurers is useful. The fifth and sixth appendices contrive to give a mass of information as to the voting of members within a very brief compass. In general the volume is interesting but not very well planned. The references to the standing of different families in periods between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries lack precision and would have been better omitted. The book would have gained in value had it been dedicated to a really detailed examination of the members of Parliament for a single county.

DAVID MATHEW

THE ENGLISH EPIC AND ITS BACKGROUND. By E. M. W. Tillyard.
(Chatto and Windus; 25s.)

Everyone is familiar with Dr Tillyard's erudition and independence of judgment, so it is no surprise to hear him voicing original and